

I am sure the American people are not shocked to hear that Republicans once again sided with the wealthiest in our Nation when they repealed the estate tax last week. Meantime, Republicans refused to join Democrats in providing nearly 7 million Americans a pay raise.

It is truly mind-boggling that House Republicans continue to believe that minimum-wage workers can still get by on \$5.15 an hour. Don't they know if you take inflation into account the minimum wage is at its lowest level in 50 years? Don't Republicans know this is the second-longest amount of time minimum-wage workers have gone without a pay raise? Don't they know that nearly three-fourths of minimum-wage workers are not just taking care of themselves but also a family?

Mr. Speaker, this is totally immoral. In this great Nation it is unbelievable that nearly 7 million people must struggle to this extent to make ends meet. It is only fair we give these workers a raise.

Democrats are not giving up, and we will continue to fight to give these workers their first pay raise in 9 years. It is only fair.

#### PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY AND ISRAEL

(Mrs. DRAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, last night, we watched as Israel launched a targeted operation on the Gaza Strip to recover Israeli Corporal Gilad Shalit, who had been kidnapped during an attack by members of Hamas' military wing.

As an independent sovereign nation, Israel has every right to respond to acts of aggression against its homeland and the soldiers who defend it. In the name of peace, the Palestinian Authority must meet the calls from Israel and nations such as France and Egypt to produce the abducted soldier.

Our Nation must stand behind our allies in the global war on terror, support their right to protect their citizens, and call for Hamas to abandon aggression and violence and work for a peaceful solution recognizing Israel as part of a two-nation plan.

#### HELP SALMON FISHERMEN ON NORTHWEST COAST

(Ms. WOOLSEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to support the fishers and the fishers' families on the west coast whose livelihood teeters on the brink of disaster as we stand here today.

It is outrageous that it has come to this. It is outrageous that the Bush administration's botched Klamath River policies will shut down 90 percent of

the commercial salmon season and take huge bites out of the recreational and tribal catches.

It is outrageous that fisheries' managers were given the task of deciding between the survival of fishers and the survival of Klamath salmon, without the means to achieve either.

It is outrageous that the Bush administration continues to punish the fishing industry by challenging the court decision that would have returned needed flows to the Klamath River area.

It is outrageous that despite a 60 percent cutback in last year's fishing season, emergency economic assistance has been denied.

And, finally, it is outrageous that without economic assistance this year, many fishermen and their boats will be down and useless for the rest of eternity.

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#### BAN DUMPING IN THE GREAT LAKES

(Mr. KIRK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, this week I am introducing bipartisan legislation to ban dumping in the Great Lakes. Along with my Democratic colleague DAN LIPINSKI, we are moving the Great Lakes Water Protection Act because the number of beach closings in Illinois rose from 213 in 2003 to over 600 in 2004.

There were over 140 beach closings in my district alone last year. Our bill, supported by the Alliance for the Great Lakes, the Sierra Club and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Chicago, sets a Federal date certain to ban dumping in the source of our drinking water. Fines under this bill would support building new sewage control projects to protect the lake.

I want to give a special thank you to a member of my staff, Ms. Kristy Cole, who drafted this legislation. As she leaves the Congress for a Northwestern JD/MBA program, we will now gather bipartisan support for this common-sense environmental reform.

#### DEMOCRATS OFFER A PRESCRIPTION FOR CHANGE TO FINALLY HELP SENIORS WITH RX DRUG COSTS

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, recent reports have shown why the Republican prescription drug plan is not working for seniors. Prices are still going up, and millions of seniors are about to fall into the doughnut hole, a period where they receive no coverage but continue to pay their premiums.

Democrats have long believed there is a better way, so we introduced a Democratic prescription for change.

Our plan would give Medicare the bargaining power to negotiate lower prices with drug companies. The VA is doing that right now, and veterans are paying 43 percent less for their drugs than American seniors.

With all the money we save from negotiating lower prices, we have closed the doughnut hole to ensure that seniors are not losing coverage for a substantial portion of the year. Mr. Speaker, if Republicans are really interested in helping our seniors with their prescription drug bills, they would join us in supporting this prescription for change. It just doesn't make sense to continue with a plan that isn't lowering costs and creates a giant gap in coverage.

#### STOP INTELLIGENCE LEAKS

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. The New York Times, you know, the actions of that storied paper certainly are the subject of much discussion. Mr. Speaker, it is a sad discussion, because it is a discussion about those who chose to leak information and those who chose to print that leaked information that is harmful to this great Nation's security.

It is unfortunate, and it does add to the level of distrust of bureaucracy and of government. It is sad. It is disappointing.

The perpetrators of those actions, Mr. Speaker, can rationalize all they want. But the point is this: Those actions, leaking that information, printing that information, make our intelligence community's job a little harder.

They make defunding terrorists and their activities more difficult, and they make our American communities less safe and less secure. It is a sad action, and it is an action with unfortunate consequences.

#### WASHINGTON REPUBLICANS CAN'T IGNORE FACT THAT THEY CREATED RECORD-SETTING DEFICITS

(Mr. CLEAVER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I am a Democrat, and I am glad about it. The reason for this joy is over the fact that the party to which I belong is pushing back against this Republican-led Congress and their out-of-control spending. Let us take a look at the facts. President Bush and congressional Republicans have turned a \$5.6 trillion surplus into a \$4 trillion deficit, a change of \$9 trillion.

This is the most fiscally irresponsible American administration. We owe China almost \$150 billion. My hope is that we never have to go to war with them because I don't believe they are going to finance it.